

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES
CLASS 2 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION EVALUATION REPORT
Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Project
32201 Forrestal Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

This Exemption Evaluation Report documents the eligibility of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes' Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Project for a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

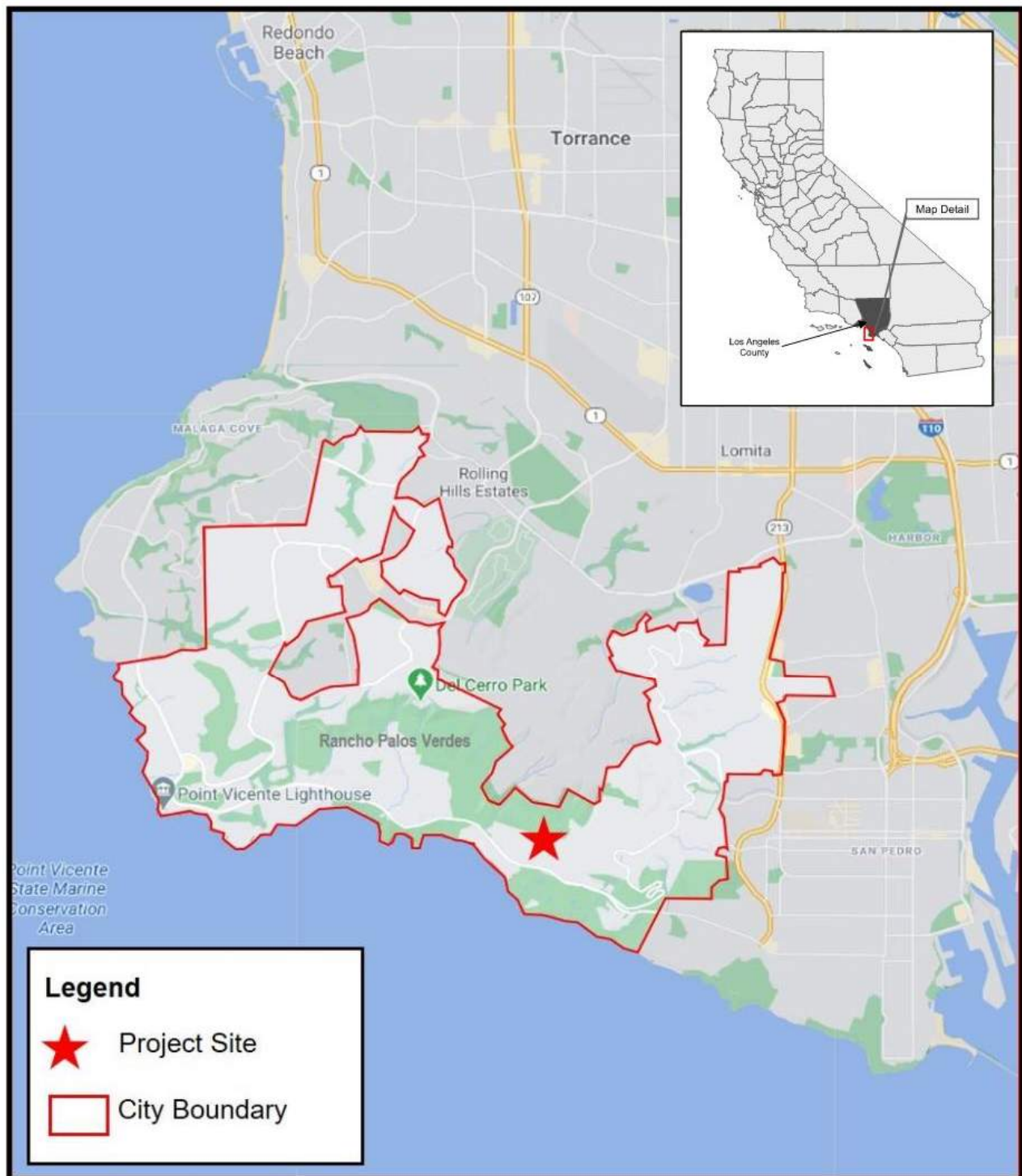
Project Description and Location

Ladera Linda Park (Park) is a former elementary school site located at 32201 Forrestal Drive (Project Site) near the intersection with Pirate Drive in the southern portion of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (see Figures 1 and 2). Amenities at the Park include paddle tennis courts, tot lot, playground, two basketball courts, restrooms, walking paths, and parking lots. The Park is also the home of the Discovery Room, which features static exhibits of local flora, fauna, and geologic information. Staff and volunteers (Los Serenos Docents) provide educational programs on-site for a large variety of school, youth, and other groups, as well as conduct docent-led hikes in the adjacent Forrestal Nature Reserve. The Park also has a multi-purpose room and classroom available for rental for meetings and private parties.

The Park is located in the City-designated Institutional (I) zoning district. According to Section 17.26.050 of the Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code, any expansion of an existing development in the Institutional zoning district that involves either a new structure or an addition to an existing structure, which creates at least 500 square feet of additional floor area, shall require the approval of a conditional use permit (CUP). In addition, the "I" zone limits the height of buildings to 16 feet but allows for taller structures through a CUP. Accordingly, as the new building is proposed to be taller than 16 feet, approval of a CUP is also required.

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City) owns, operates, and maintains the Park site, which includes the Project Site. The City is proposing to demolish the existing buildings that were originally built as classroom space for an elementary school to accommodate the construction of a new community center building in their place (Project). The Project, which would primarily consist of a new 6,790-gross-square-foot community center building (with 137 square feet of covered patios), would be less than 50 percent of the total square footage of the existing buildings (approximately 19,000 gross square feet) and occupy a smaller footprint within the existing built areas of the Park. The building would contain a dividable multi-purpose room, two classrooms, a meeting room, a docent work room, storage and staging areas, public restrooms, staff office, an outdoor breezeway covered lobby, a small kitchen and staging area, janitorial and electrical rooms, and vestibules. In addition, the Project would include covered walkways and patio areas; outdoor tiered seating area for nature talks, summer camps, etc.; children's playground area, one full basketball court and a half basketball court; two paddle tennis courts; small storage facility for public works and emergency supplies; upper and lower lawn areas; solar roof; low-impact, native, drought-tolerant landscaping; and 54 parking spaces in the courtyard located adjacent to the building and playground.

The Project would extend the hours of operation of the Park from the current times of 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, and 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays, to 8:00 a.m. to dusk daily. While the Project would allow the Park to be used more during the day, restrictions on park usage and rental hours are proposed to address community concerns and are as follows:



Source: Google Map, 2021



FIGURE 1
Regional Location Map

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Source: Google Map, 2021



FIGURE 2
Project Location Map

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Type of Use	Current Policy	Proposed Policy
Rental Hours	Not specified	10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Classes	Not specified	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Private Rentals after 5:00 p.m.	No current limit	Two times per month ^a
Amplified Music (indoor only)	10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Special Events	No current limit	Eight times per year ^b
Notes: ^a Restriction does not apply to non-profit events, City events, or Homeowners Association (HOA) rentals. ^b No nighttime special events would be permitted without a Special Use Permit, which would require public notification. Staff would coordinate with American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) schedule to minimize impact.		

In addition, no changes to the Park's existing uses, including programming and activities, would occur as a result of Project implementation. The programming and activities include adult/senior programming (e.g., exercise classes, book clubs, lunch socials, technical/computer classes, card games, painting classes, dance classes), child programming (e.g., arts and crafts, music, day care classes, cooking classes, storytime), teen programming, non-profit/community rentals, nature-based activities, private rentals, and youth dance.

The Park is currently supported by one part-time staff member per shift, who is overseen by one full-time recreation supervisor. The Project is anticipated to require two part-time staff members per shift and continue to have one full-time recreation supervisor.

Building and park security would be incorporated into the overall design of the Park and proposed community center and would include the following:

- Greatly-simplified single building design
- Clear points of entry and improved sight lines and within view of the monitoring staff office to reduce/eliminate blind spots
- Appropriately placed exterior and interior security cameras and motion sensors
- Appropriate low-level landscaping to eliminate visual obstructions to all Park areas
- Control of ingress and egress points during operating hours and non-operating hours
- Glass break sensors
- Comprehensive best practices related to lighting design throughout the Park and community center
- Ability to secure the Park perimeter at night through fencing and improved entrance gates for both pedestrian and vehicular access points
- Increased utilization of the Park combined with increased staffing presence to deter undesirable behavior in the Park during operating hours.

Figure 3 presents the existing and proposed conditions at the Project Site.

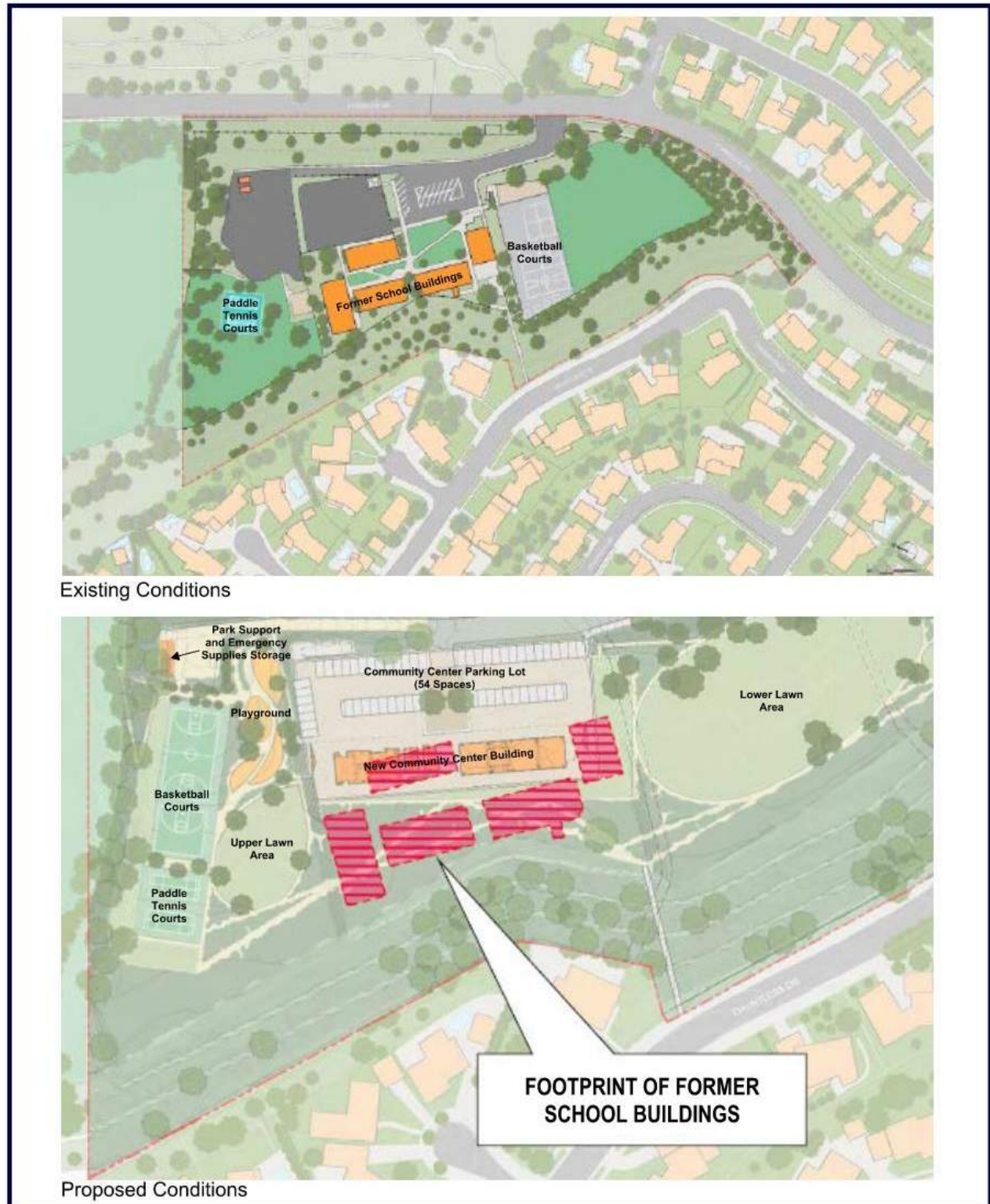


FIGURE 3
Existing and Proposed Site Conditions

Categorical Exemption

CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines require the preparation of environmental documents to assess and report the environmental impacts of certain types of projects that could result in adverse effects on the environment. Pursuant to CEQA Section 21084, the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15300 et seq.) also define classes of projects that are found by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to not have a significant effect on the environment and, thus, are declared to be categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents. These types of projects are exempt from CEQA, provided that the lead agency can make appropriate findings, and provided that none of the exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions apply (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2).

Since the Project consists of the replacement of existing buildings with a new community center building that would be substantially smaller in size but more functional, the categorical exemption that is applicable to the Project is Class 2 (Replacement or Reconstruction) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15302. Class 2 consists of those projects characterized as replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

As discussed above, the Project would replace the existing facility, comprised of several former elementary school buildings, with a single building that would be less than 50 percent of the total square footage of the existing facility. In addition, the new building would occupy a smaller footprint than the former school buildings within the existing built areas of the Park. Furthermore, the Project would not result in any changes to the Park's uses, programming, and activities and would, therefore, have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the existing facility that would be replaced. Accordingly, the Project would satisfy the requirements for a Class 2 Categorical Exemption.

Considerations of Exceptions to the Use of a Categorical Exemption

Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines identifies the following exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption:

- a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located—a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.
- b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.
- c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

- d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.
- e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
- f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

As evaluated in the paragraphs below, none of these exceptions apply to the Project. Therefore, the lead agency (i.e., City of Rancho Palos Verdes) is not precluded from categorically exempting the Project from CEQA.

Location

The Project Site is located within an existing park site. Although the Project Site is located immediately south of the Forrestal Nature Reserve, the Project Site itself has been disturbed and developed (originally with an elementary school with multiple classroom buildings, which have been used as park facilities since the 1980s). The Project Site does not include any environmentally sensitive lands, such as natural open space, or other lands designated for open space or preservation purposes. Moreover, this exception does not apply to Class 2, which is the categorical exemption class that is applicable to the Project.

Cumulative Impact

No notable related development or public facility projects are under review or proposed for development in the vicinity of the Project Site. The operation of the new community center building and the proposed outdoor improvements would not introduce any new impacts beyond existing conditions since no changes to the Park's uses would occur as a result of the Project. Therefore, no cumulative impacts would occur.

Significant Effect Due to Unusual Circumstances

There are no features that distinguish the Project from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes operates and maintains 17 recreational facilities, including parks, beaches, and interpretive centers with similar facilities and uses to Ladera Linda Park and Community Center. As a normal course of operations, the City maintains and improves its recreational facilities. The Project would involve a replacement of existing facilities at the Park that would result in the demolition of several former school buildings and the construction of a single building in their place. The operation of the new community center building and the proposed outdoor improvements would be consistent with current and historical uses of the Project Site and other recreational facilities in the City. Therefore, there are no unusual circumstances associated with the Project.

Scenic Highways

There are no officially designated State scenic highways within 25 miles of the Project Site.¹ The closest officially designated State scenic highway, which extends approximately 2.5 miles, is the southern end of State Route 27 (Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway) in unincorporated Los Angeles County, just west of the community of Pacific Palisades in the City of Los Angeles, which is approximately 26 miles northwest of the Project Site. Additionally, the closest route on the list of scenic highways eligible for official designation is the northern end of State Route 1 (Pacific Coast Highway) in Long Beach near State Route 19 (Lakewood Boulevard), which is approximately 12 miles northeast of the Project Site and extends over 35 miles south to San Juan Capistrano in Orange County. Therefore, there would be no impacts involving removal or alteration of scenic resources or landmarks within view of an officially designated or eligible State scenic highway.

Hazardous Waste Sites

Section 65962.5 of the Government Code requires that the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) compile lists of all hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; all sites included in the Abandoned Site Assessment Program; all drinking water wells that contain detectable levels of organic contaminants; all underground storage tanks with unauthorized releases; and all solid waste disposal sites with a migration of hazardous materials. The proposed project site is not included on any of these lists compiled by the CDPH or SWRCB. The DTSC maintains the EnviroStor database, which provides a list of all hazardous waste sites, as required by Section 65962.5 described above, as well as information about other sites that are under investigation of reported hazardous substance contamination and past cases where contamination was identified at a site and properly removed. While the Project Site address is listed on the EnviroStor database, the subject area that required corrective action was limited to a 400-foot by 60-foot area north of the soccer fields to the northwest of the Project Site, where construction debris in the stockpiled soil was found to contain asbestos materials in 2016; this area did not include the Project Site. DTSC entered into an agreement with the Palos Verdes Unified School District (PVPUSD) and the Palos Verdes AYSO (PV AYSO) to assess the extent of contamination and develop a work plan for remediation. In January 2018, DTSC approved a report concluding that no further investigation was needed due to the absence of hazardous substances and due to the sampling results and findings concluding no threat to human health and the environment exists.² Therefore, there would be no impacts involving a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

¹ California Department of Transportation, California State Scenic Highway System Map, 2018, available at <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2e921695c43643b1aaf7000dfcc19983>, accessed January 7, 2021.

² Priority 1 Environmental, Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report for the Ladera Linda Park, 32201 Forrester Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275, December 18, 2017; California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Envirostor Report for the Ladera Linda Site (60002419), available at https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report?global_id=60002419, accessed January 7, 2021.

Historical Resources

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. CEQA Section 15064.5(b) states the following:

A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

- (1) Substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired.*
- (2) The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project:*
 - (A) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register; or*
 - (B) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code; ... or*
 - (C) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.*
- (3) Generally, a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings ... shall be considered as mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historical resource.*

As described in the attached Cultural Resources Identification Report, no historic resources were identified on the Project Site. In addition, the archaeological survey and buried site sensitivity analysis conducted for the Project Site concluded that the Project Site has a low sensitivity for prehistoric- and historic-period archaeological resources due to the high degree of prior ground disturbance associated with the construction of the former elementary school buildings. Therefore, there would be no impacts to historic resources that would result from Project implementation.

Conclusion

The Project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15302 of the State CEQA Guidelines—Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction. As described above, the Project meets the requirements of Class 2, as it consists of replacement of an existing facility where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure(s) replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity. Furthermore, as described above, none of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to the Project.

February 16, 2021

Ken Rukavina, Director of Community Development

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES

30940 Hawthorne Boulevard

Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE LADERA LINDA PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Dear Mr. Rukavina:

In support of the Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Master Plan Project (project), Michael Baker International staff completed a South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) records search, archival research, literature review, historical map review, field survey, and evaluation of the Ladera Linda Elementary School for eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) to determine whether the project could result in a significant adverse change to historical resources in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Methods, results, and recommendations are summarized below; figures are provided in **Attachment 1**.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of the demolition of five extant buildings, formerly the Ladera Linda Elementary School, and the construction of a new community center in their place. The new community center building would be less than 50 percent of the total square footage of the existing buildings and occupy a smaller footprint within the existing built areas of the park. The building would contain a dividable multi-purpose room, two classrooms, a meeting room, a docent workroom, storage and staging areas, public restrooms, staff offices, an outdoor breezeway covered lobby, a small kitchen and staging area, janitorial and electrical rooms, and vestibules. Additionally, the proposed project would include covered walkways and patio area; outdoor tiered seating area for nature talks, summer camps, etc.; children's playground area; one full-sized basketball court and a half basketball court; two paddle tennis courts; small storage facility for public works and emergency supplies; upper and lower lawn areas; solar roof; and parking spaces.

The project area is identified as the boundaries of assessor parcel numbers 7564-001-905, 7564-001-906, 7564-001-908, 7564-001-910, 7564-001-911, 7564-001-912, and 7564-001-913, because this includes the maximum extent of ground disturbance and project activities associated with demolition, site preparation, and construction. The vertical depth of ground disturbance is 10 feet to encompass the maximum depth of excavation (see **Attachment 1**).

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CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION METHODS

The results of the SCCIC records search, archival research, field survey, historical map review, and California Register evaluation are presented below.

SOUTH CENTRAL COASTAL INFORMATION CENTER

Michael Baker International conducted a records search (File No. 21959.8109) on January 22, 2021. The SCCIC, as part of the California Historical Resources Information System, California State University, Fullerton, an affiliate of the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), is the official state repository of cultural resources records and reports for Los Angeles County. As part of the records search, the following federal and California inventories were reviewed:

- California Inventory of Historic Resources (OHP 1976).
- California Points of Historical Interest (OHP 1992 and updates).
- California Historical Landmarks (OHP 1996).
- Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility (OHP 2012).
- Built Environmental Resource Database (OHP 2021). The directory includes resources evaluated for listing and listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), National Historic Landmarks, California Register, California Historical Landmarks, and California Points of Historical Interest for Los Angeles County.

Results

No historical resources were identified within the project area; 27 cultural resources were identified within the half-mile search radius of the project. Due to the COVID-19 office closure, the SCCIC was only able to provide information for 14 of the 27 resources due to limited access to hard copies of reports, resources and maps. Eleven of the 14 resources are archaeological sites and are not described in this report for confidentiality reasons. The below table briefly describes three resources within the search area.

Resource Name/#	Address	Type	OHP Status Code	Historical Resource?	Approx. Distance to Project
Ishibashi Farm P-19-150320	Paseo Del Mar	Farm	California Point of Interest	Yes	½ mile
Site of Old Whaling Station P-19-186554	Palos Verde Drive	Commercial Building	Unknown	Unknown	¼ mile

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Resource Name/#	Address	Type	OHP Status Code	Historical Resource?	Approx. Distance to Project
SP25 P-19-189464	4207 Palos Verdes Drive South	Engineering Structure	6Y- Determined ineligible for National Register by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or Local Listing.	No	¼ mile

No cultural resources studies have been previously completed within the project area; 33 reports have been completed within the half-mile search radius. Due to the COVID-19 office closure, the SCCIC was only able to provide information on 14 of the 33 reports, and 7 reports provide confidential archaeological information and are not identified in the below table.

Author	Date	Title
Author not provided	Date not provided	<i>Environmental Impact Report Regarding: Seacliff Hills a Planned Residential Development</i>
Eggers, A.V.	1978	<i>Report on an Archaeological Survey of Goode & Goode Parcel No. 17 in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, California</i>
Eggers, A.V.	1978	<i>Report on the Cultural Resources Survey of Goode & Goode Parcel No. 15 in Rancho Palos Verdes, California</i>
White, Laura S., Robert S. White, and David M. Van Horn	1986	<i>An Archaeological Survey of an 18.1 Acre Parcel of Property in the Portuguese Bend Area of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, California</i>
Bissell, Ronald M.	1989	<i>Cultural Resources Reconnaissance of Approximately 455 Acres in the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Los Angeles County on the Palos Verdes Peninsula</i>
Brown, Joan C.	1991	<i>Cultural Resources Reconnaissance of 378 Acres Located in Rancho Palos Verdes, Portuguese Bend, Los Angeles County, California</i>
Stickel, Gary E., John Minch, Alexa Gow, and Jason Minch	1998	<i>Fort Macarthur Sea Bench Base End Stations Los Angeles Harbor Defense System, Us Army Corps of Engineers, Section 106 Report</i>

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LITERATURE AND HISTORICAL MAP REVIEW

Michael Baker International staff reviewed various sources of information about the project area and the vicinity. Below is a list of maps, aerial photographs and online resources reviewed, followed by a narrative description of the results for the project area.

- Plat Map of Rancho los Palos Verdes. 1:31,680 scale plat (OAC 2021)
- San Pedro, Calif. 1:62,500 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1896)
- San Pedro Hills, Calif. 1:24,000 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1925)
- San Pedro Hills, Calif. 1:24,000 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1928)
- San Pedro Hills, Calif. 1:24,000 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1942)
- San Pedro, Calif. 1:62,500 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1944)
- San Pedro, Calif. 1:24,000 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1951)
- San Pedro, Calif. 1:24,000 scale topographic quadrangle (USGS 1964)
- Single-frame aerial photograph: C-113 (UCSB 1927)
- Single-frame aerial photograph: C-11351 (UCSB 1947)
- Single-frame aerial photograph: C-22555 (UCSB 1956)
- Single-frame aerial photograph: C-25019 (UCSB 1965)
- Single-frame aerial photograph: TG-7500 (UCSB 1975)
- Single-frame aerial photograph: AMI-LA-83 (UCSB 1983)
- Historicaerials.com (Historicaerials.com 2021)
- *California Archaeology* (Moratto 1984)
- "One If by Land, Two If by Sea: Who Were the First Californians?" (Erlandson et al. 2007)
- "Cultural Tradition and Ecological Adaptation on the Southern California Coast" (Warren 1968)
- "A Suggested Chronology for Southern California Coastal Archaeology" (Wallace 1955)
- *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles* (McCawley 1996)
- "Reconceptualizing the Encinitas Tradition of Southern California" (Sutton and Gardner 2010)
- "Gabrielino" (Bean and Smith 1978)
- Online Archive of California (OAC 2021)
- Newspapers.com (Newspapers.com 2021)
- California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC 2021)
- City of Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018)

Results

The division of prehistory into temporal periods provides a framework for understanding culture change in years before present (BP). The earliest inhabitants to the Los Angeles Basin occurred in the Paleocoastal or Paleoindian Period terms, indicating proximity to the coast (Moratto 1984; Erlandson et al. 2007), and generally dated between about 13,000 and 8,500 BP. These earliest inhabitants were highly mobile hunter-gatherers. Warren (1968) and others (Sutton and Gardner

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2010) redefined the Millingstone Horizon as the Encinitas Tradition, which dates to between about 8,500 BP and 3,500 BP. Encinitas is a widespread cultural phenomenon distinguished by an abundance of manos and metates and a dearth of vertebrate faunal remains, projectile points, and mortar and pestle groundstone tools. Definitions of the Intermediate Period and Late Prehistoric Period continue to be employed as temporal periods as Wallace (1955) defined them, though understanding of cultural practices, technology, and migrations, among other aspects, has been thoroughly deepened (as summarized by Sutton 2010).

At the beginning of the historic period, the project area is understood to be within the ancestral territory of the Gabrieliños, though no Gabrieliño villages are known to be within the vicinity of the project area. The Gabrieliño Indians were associated with the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, located approximately 28 miles northeast. Generally, their territory included all of the Los Angeles Basin, parts of the Santa Ana and Santa Monica Mountains, along the coast from Aliso Creek in the south to Topanga Canyon in the north, and San Clemente, San Nicolas, and Santa Catalina Islands. The Gabrieliños spoke a dialect of the Cupan group of the Takic language family (Bean and Smith 1978: 538-549).

The project area is depicted as part of Rancho de Los Palos Verdes in 1853 and is first depicted with one building beginning in 1951 along Forrestal Drive (OAC 2021; USGS 1896, 1951). However, by 1964, the project area is depicted as vacant in area USGS topographic maps (USGS 1964). A 1965 aerial photograph further depicts the project area as vacant (UCSB 1965). By 1972, the project area is depicted with the extant five buildings along with a parking lot (Historicaerials.com 2021). The City of Rancho Palos Verdes was incorporated in 1973 (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018: 1-3). By 1975, the project area depicts an additional two, smaller square buildings to the northeast making seven buildings in total (UCSB 1975). By 1980, these two, smaller square buildings are no longer present (Historicaerials.com 2021). By 2002, the project area is depicted with extant features, which include an additional parking lot north of the five extant buildings, and a recreational area northeast of the extant buildings (Historicaerials.com 2021).

PEDESTRIAN SURVEY

A combined intensive and reconnaissance level pedestrian survey of the project area was conducted on February 9, 2021, by Nicholas Hearth, MA, RPA, Senior Archaeologist. Mr. Hearth is cross trained in historic built environment resource identification and recording. Photographs were taken of the project area and the Ladera Linda former school buildings. Location information for each photograph was recorded. The project area is landscaped and heavily vegetated with soils rarely exposed (<5% visibility) in constructed cuts and terraces. All observed soil was fill, and no archaeological resources were observed during the survey.

BURIED SITE SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

Analysis for buried cultural resources indicates that the project area has a low potential to contain buried resources due to the high degree of ground disturbance from the construction of the

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building pads of the Ladera Linda Elementary School and its associated facilities. The determination of low sensitivity within the project area contrasts with the surrounding area, which has a high degree of sensitivity as the records search and background indicate a high number of potential cultural resources in the vicinity. The grading associated with the school construction would have destroyed the archaeological context necessary for significance under CEQA. The natural topography of the area around the project site is steep and rugged with a high degree of slope. The construction of level building pads, which flattened this topography, would have destroyed the primary context of any potential archaeological sites. The degree of previous grading was verified through review of project grading plans, which include extant topography.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONSULTATION

On February 10, 2021, Michael Baker International sent a letter with figures depicting the project area via email to the Los Angeles City Historical Society. The letter requested any information or concerns regarding historic properties within the project area. No response was received. See **Attachment 2**.

CALIFORNIA REGISTER EVALUATIONS

The historic context statement and California Register evaluations for the Ladera Linda Elementary School are located in the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms in **Attachment 3**. The resource is recommended ineligible for listing in the California Register based on lack of association with a historic context.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The SCCIC records search, literature review, archival research, field survey, and California Register evaluations identified no historical resources, as defined by CEQA Section 15064.5(a), within the project area. The archaeological survey and buried site sensitivity analysis conducted for the project concluded that the project area has a low sensitivity for prehistoric and historic-period archaeological resources due to a high degree of prior disturbance from the construction of the Ladera Linda Elementary School.

PREPARER QUALIFICATIONS

This memo was prepared by Michael Baker International Architectural Historian Chris Wendt and Principal Investigator/Senior Archaeologist Nicholas F. Hearth. It was reviewed by Senior Cultural Resources Manager Margo Nayyar.

Mr. Wendt conducts National Register, California Register, and various local register evaluations for projects subject to CEQA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). For these evaluations, he conducts a variety of tasks including field survey and photographic documentation of historic-era resources, property research, writing architectural descriptions, and

MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL**RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE FOR THE LADERA LINDA PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

developing historic statements. He is deeply entrenched in issues of local history teaching and has served as the visitor services and volunteer coordinator for the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust and Museum of Sonoma County. He also worked with the Petaluma Historical Museum and Library and Cotati Museum and Historical Society where he conducted archival research and aided in the identification of historical resources. He is a Secretary of the Interior Professionally Qualified historian and architectural historian.

Mr. Hearth has worked as an archaeologist in cultural resource management since 2002. He meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric archaeology. He received his BA in anthropology in 2003 from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and his MA in anthropology in 2006 from the University of California, Riverside. Mr. Hearth has worked in California, New Mexico, and multiple states both in the Midwest and New England. Mr. Hearth is well versed in applying Section 106 of the NHPA, CEQA, and the National Environmental Policy Act on a variety of projects across many market sectors. He has completed projects in all phases of archaeology: Phase I Pedestrian and Shovel Test Surveys, Extended Phase I Survey, Buried Site Testing, Archaeological Sensitivity Assessments, Phase II Testing and Evaluations, Phase III Data Recovery, and Phase IV Monitoring. His project responsibilities include overseeing archaeological, historical, and paleontological studies, directing all phases of archaeological field and laboratory work, and ensuring that the quality of analysis and reporting meets or exceeds appropriate local, state, and federal standards.

Ms. Nayyar is a senior architectural historian with 11 years of cultural management experience in California. Her experience includes built environment surveys, evaluation of historic-era resources using guidelines outlined in the National Register and the California Register, and preparation of cultural resources technical studies pursuant to CEQA and Section 106 of the NHPA, including identification studies, finding of effect documents, memorandum of agreements, programmatic agreements, and Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscapes Survey mitigation documentation. She prepares cultural resources sections for CEQA environmental documents, including infill checklists, initial studies, and environmental impact reports, as well as National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental documents, including environmental impact statements and environmental assessments. She also specializes in municipal preservation planning, historic preservation ordinance updates, Native American consultation, and provision of Certified Local Government training to interested local governments. She develops Survey 123 and Esri Collector applications for large-scale historic resources surveys, and authors National Register nomination packets. Ms. Nayyar meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for history and architectural history.

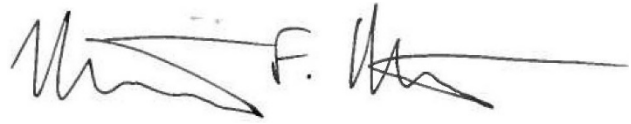
Sincerely,

MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL

**RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE FOR THE LADERA LINDA PARK AND
COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES, LOS ANGELES
COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**



Chris Wendt, MA
Architectural Historian



Nicholas F. Hearth, MA, RPA
Principal Investigator/Senior Archaeologist

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Figures

Attachment 2 – Historical Society Consultation

Attachment 3 – DPR 523 Forms

MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL

RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE FOR THE LADERA LINDA PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL

RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE FOR THE LADERA LINDA PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL

**RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE FOR THE LADERA LINDA PARK AND
COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES, LOS ANGELES
COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

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Attachment 1

Figures

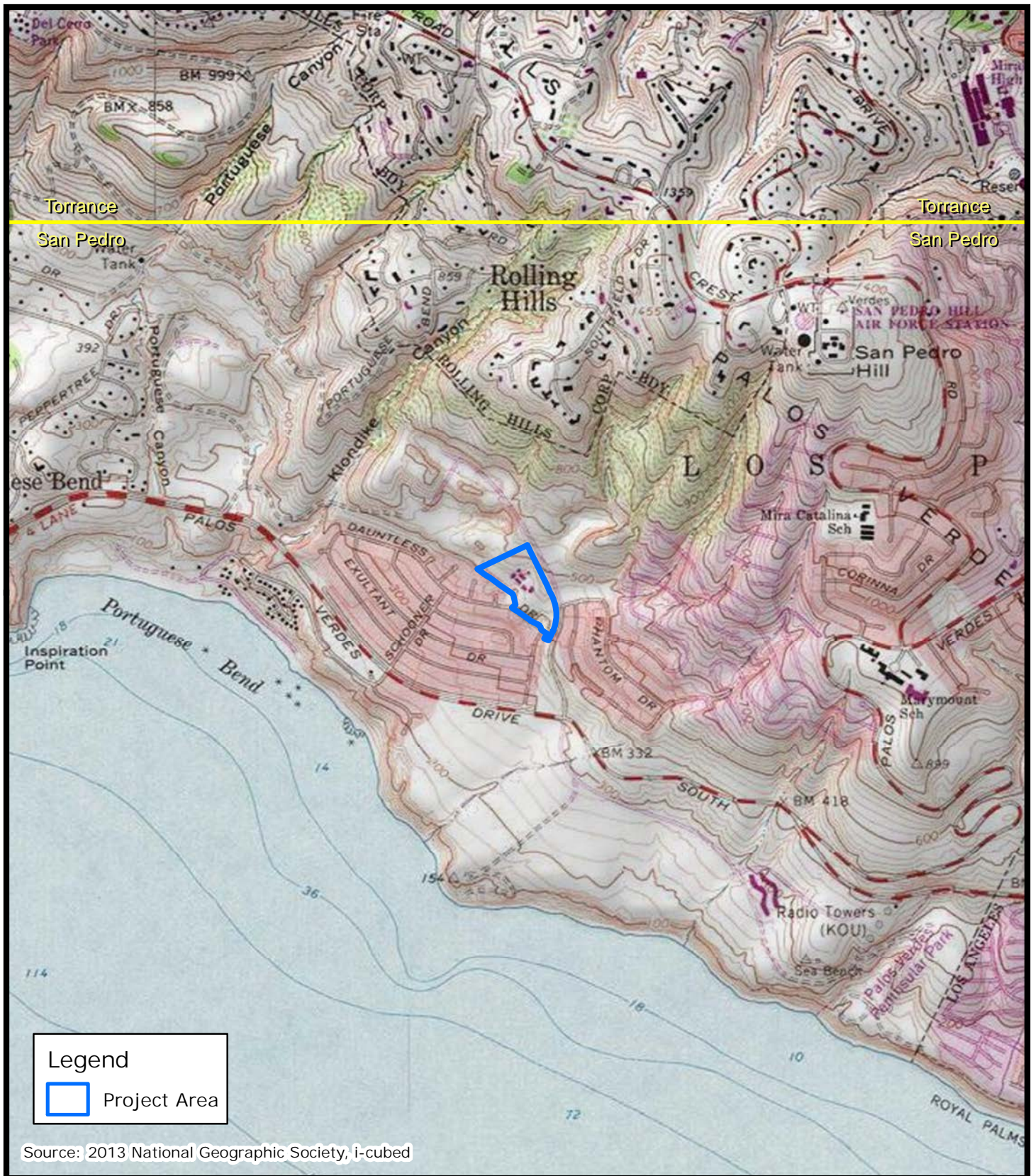


FIGURE 2
Project Location Map

Attachment 2

Historical Society Consultation

From: [Wendt, Chris](#)
To: info@lacityhistory.org
Cc: [Nayyar, Margo](#); [Hearth, Nicholas](#)
Subject: RE: Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Master Plan Project consultation letter
Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:35:00 AM
Attachments: [LA City HS consultation letter.pdf](#)

To whom it may concern,

Michael Baker International is conducting a cultural resources investigation for the Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Master Plan Project in Rancho Palos Verdes, California; see the attached file for a project location and description. Please notify us if your organization has any information or concerns about historic properties in the area of potential effect. This is not a request for research; it is solely a request for public input related to any concerns that the Historical Society may have. If you have any questions, please contact me at your earliest convenience at chris.wendt@mbakerintl.com or (925) 949-2461.

Sincerely,

Chris Wendt | Architectural Historian

2729 Prospect Park Dr. Suite 220 | Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 | [O] 925-949-2461

chris.wendt@mbakerintl.com | www.mbakertnl.com



February 10, 2021

**LOS ANGELES HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 862311
LOS ANGELES, CA 90086-2311**

**RE: CULTURAL RESOURCES IDENTIFICATION REPORT FOR THE FOR THE LADERA LINDA
PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PROJECT**

To Whom It May Concern:

Michael Baker International is conducting a cultural resources investigation for the City of Rancho Palos Verdes – Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Mast Plan Project (project). The project is located at 32201 Forrestal Drive, as depicted in the accompanying figures (see attachment).

The project consists of the demolition of five extant buildings, formerly Ladera Linda Elementary School, and the construction of a new community center in their place. The new community center building would be less than 50 percent of the total square footage of the existing buildings and occupy a smaller footprint within the existing built areas of the park. The buildings would contain a dividable multi-purpose room, two classrooms, a meeting room, a docent workroom, storage and staging areas, public restrooms, staff offices, an outdoor breezeway covered lobby, a small kitchen and staging area, janitorial and electrical rooms, and vestibules. Additionally, the proposed project would include covered walkways and patio area; outdoor tiered seating area for nature talks, summer camps, etc.; children's playground area; one full basketball court and a half basketball court; two paddle tennis courts; small storage facility for public works and emergency supplies; upper and lower lawn areas; solar roof; and parking spaces.

Please notify us if your organization has any information or concerns about historical resources on the project site. This is not a request for research; it is solely a request for public input related to any concerns that the Los Angeles City Historical Society may have. If you have any questions, please contact me at your earliest convenience at chris.wendt@mbakerintl.com or 925-949-2461.

Sincerely,

Chris Wendt

Chris Wendt, MA
Architectural Historian

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Figures

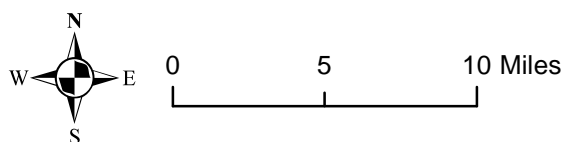


FIGURE 1
Regional Location Map

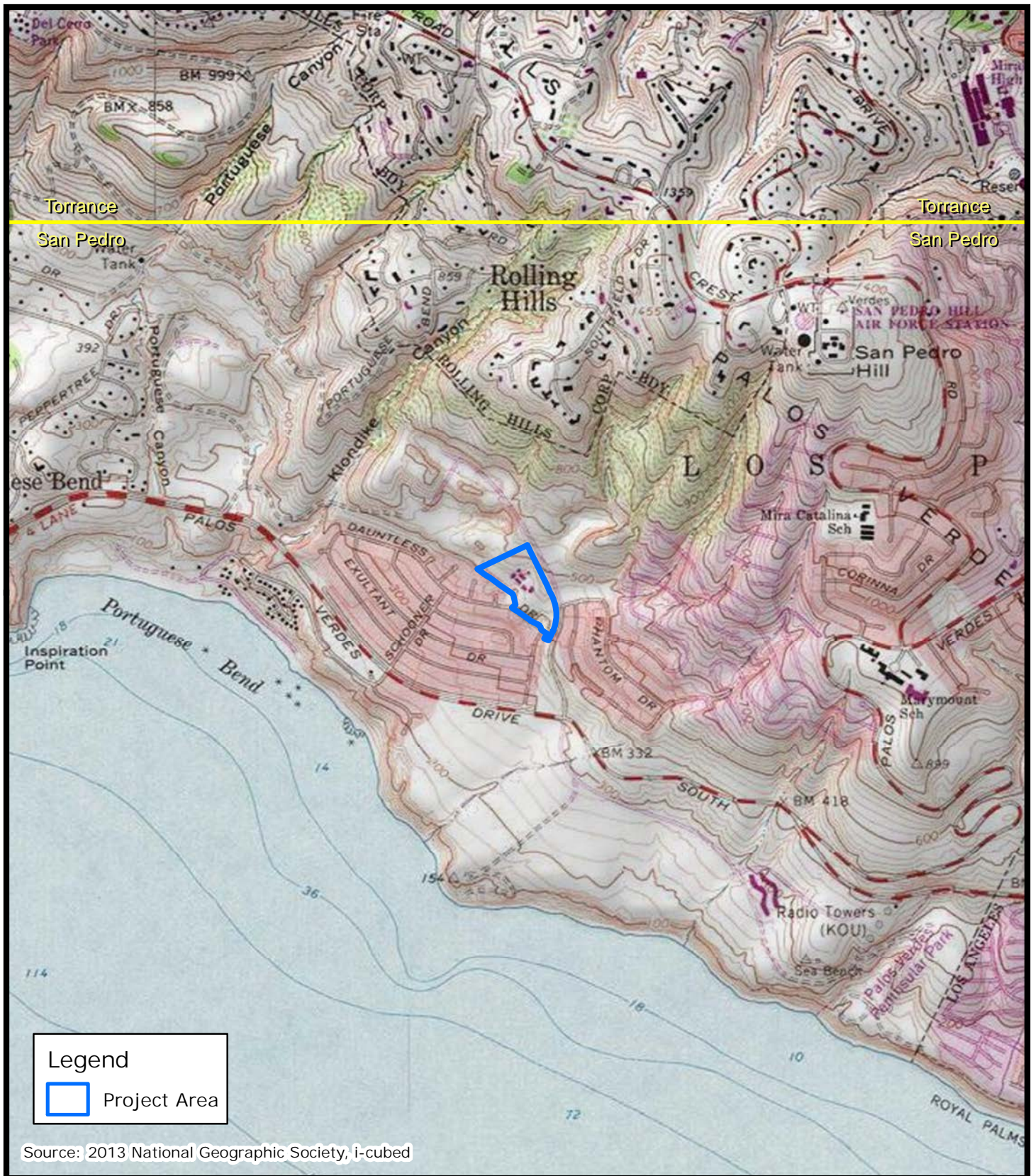


FIGURE 2
Project Location Map

Attachment 3

DPR 523 Forms

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 18

*Resource Name or #: Ladera Linda Elementary School

P1. Other Identifier: N/A

*P2. Location: ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County Los Angeles and

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad *San Pedro, Calif.* Date 1951 T 5S; R 14W ; S.B.B.M

c. Address: 32201 Forrestal Drive City: Rancho Palos Verdes Zip: 90275

d. UTM: Zone: 11S, 375063 mE/ 3733907 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 7564-001-912

*P3a. Description:

This one-story community center, and former elementary school, comprises five modular buildings that include a multipurpose room, administrative office, sheriff and park ranger office, and four classroom wings built in 1967. The community center buildings display concrete slab foundations, vinyl wall cladding, and original metal doors, as well as the original fixed, metal sash vertical sliding windows hung in groups of four on the main façade of each classroom. The buildings display low-pitched bitumen rolled roof cladding with boxed eaves and wide eave overhangs. Concrete walkways among landscaped grass connect the buildings to an asphalt parking lot to the east. The area east-northeast of the buildings displays a fenced storage area. The southern area of the property has a basketball court, grass fields, and a sand covered playground. The northern area of the property has a tennis court, grass field, playground, and shipping container stored at the northernmost corner of the property.

*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo:

Photograph 1: View west of Ladera Linda Community Center taken February 9, 2021.

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ☒ Historic
1967 (News-Pilot 1967b: 2)

*P7. Owner and Address:
City of Rancho Palos Verdes
Recreation and Parks
Department
30940 Hawthorne Boulevard
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

*P8. Recorded by:
Chris Wendt
Michael Baker International, Inc.
2729 Prospect Park Drive, #220
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

*P9. Date Recorded:
February 8, 2021

*P10. Survey Type: Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: Hearth, Nicholas and Chris Wendt. 2021. "Cultural Resources Identification Report for the Ladera Linda Park and Community Center Master Plan Project, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Angeles County, California." Rancho Cordova, CA: Michael Baker International.

*Attachments: ☒ Location Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 18

*NRHP Status Code 6Z

*Resource Name or # Ladera Linda Elementary School

- B1. Historic Name: Ladera Linda Elementary School
B2. Common Name: Ladera Linda Community Center
B3. Original Use: Elementary school
B4. Present Use: Community center

*B5. **Architectural Style:** Mid-Century Modern

*B6. **Construction History:** The property was built in 1967 as an elementary school totaling five buildings. In 1973, a portable classroom building totaling 1,280 square feet was constructed to the northeast of the extant five buildings. By 1975, two additional square buildings were constructed to the northeast of the original campus. By 1980, the two newer buildings were no longer extant. An earth station for satellite reception and cable system were installed in 1981. In 2008, a new rolled roof was installed and, in 2010, a new photovoltaic supply system was installed for emergency backup (Historicaerials.com 2021; News-Pilot 1973: 9; Priority 1 Environmental 2017: 17; UCSB 1975).

*B7. **Moved?** ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown **Date:** N/A **Original Location:** N/A

*B8. **Related Features:** N/A

B9a. **Architect:** Kistner, Wright & Wright **b. Builder:** Mallcraft, Inc

*B10. **Significance:** **Theme** School design

Area: Rancho Palos Verdes

Period of Significance: 1967 **Property Type:** Civic

Applicable Criteria: N/A

Post World War II Population and Suburban Growth

California's post-World War II population and housing growth spurred infrastructure and civic expansion in order to accommodate the boom in population; construction of new freeways and roads allowed commuters to live farther from their places of work without a significant increase in commuting time. The benefit of more distant but less expensive land, and therefore more affordable housing, competed with the benefit of proximity to employment centers. This led to the explosive expansion of metropolitan areas like Los Angeles. As suburban populations grew, jobs migrated from the cities to the suburbs. More than three-quarters of all new manufacturing and retail jobs created between 1950 and 1970 were located in suburban areas. (Caltrans 2011:18)

Road construction grew rapidly on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in the late 1950s and through the mid-1960s. The segment of Hawthorne Boulevard that extended through the peninsula was completed in segments with the final segment from Torrance to Palos Verdes Drive North being completed in 1965. These arteries provided easy access for commuters living on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and allowed for the suburbanization of the formerly rural area. (Megowan Realty Group 2020a, 2020b)

B11. **Additional Resource Attributes:** N/A

*B12. **References:** See Continuation Sheets

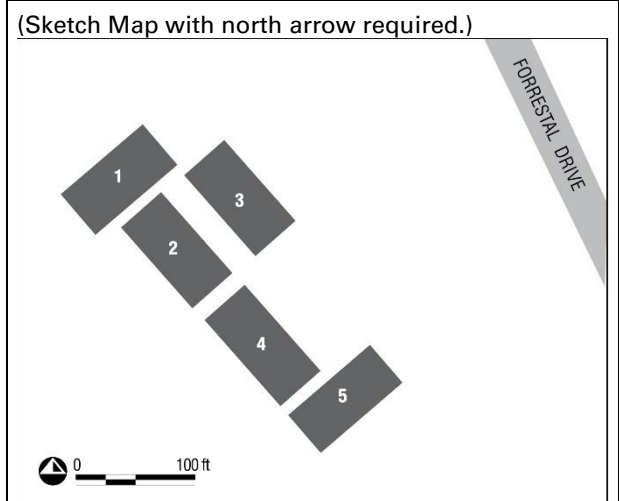
B13. **Remarks:** N/A

***B14. Evaluator:**

Chris Wendt, Architectural Historian
Michael Baker International
2729 Prospect Park Drive, #220
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

***Date of Evaluation:** February 8, 2021

(This space reserved for official comments.)



State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
LOCATION MAP

Primary #
HRI#
Trinominal

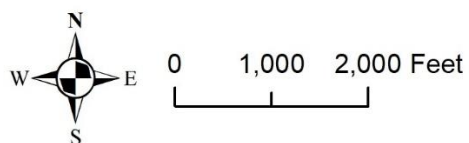
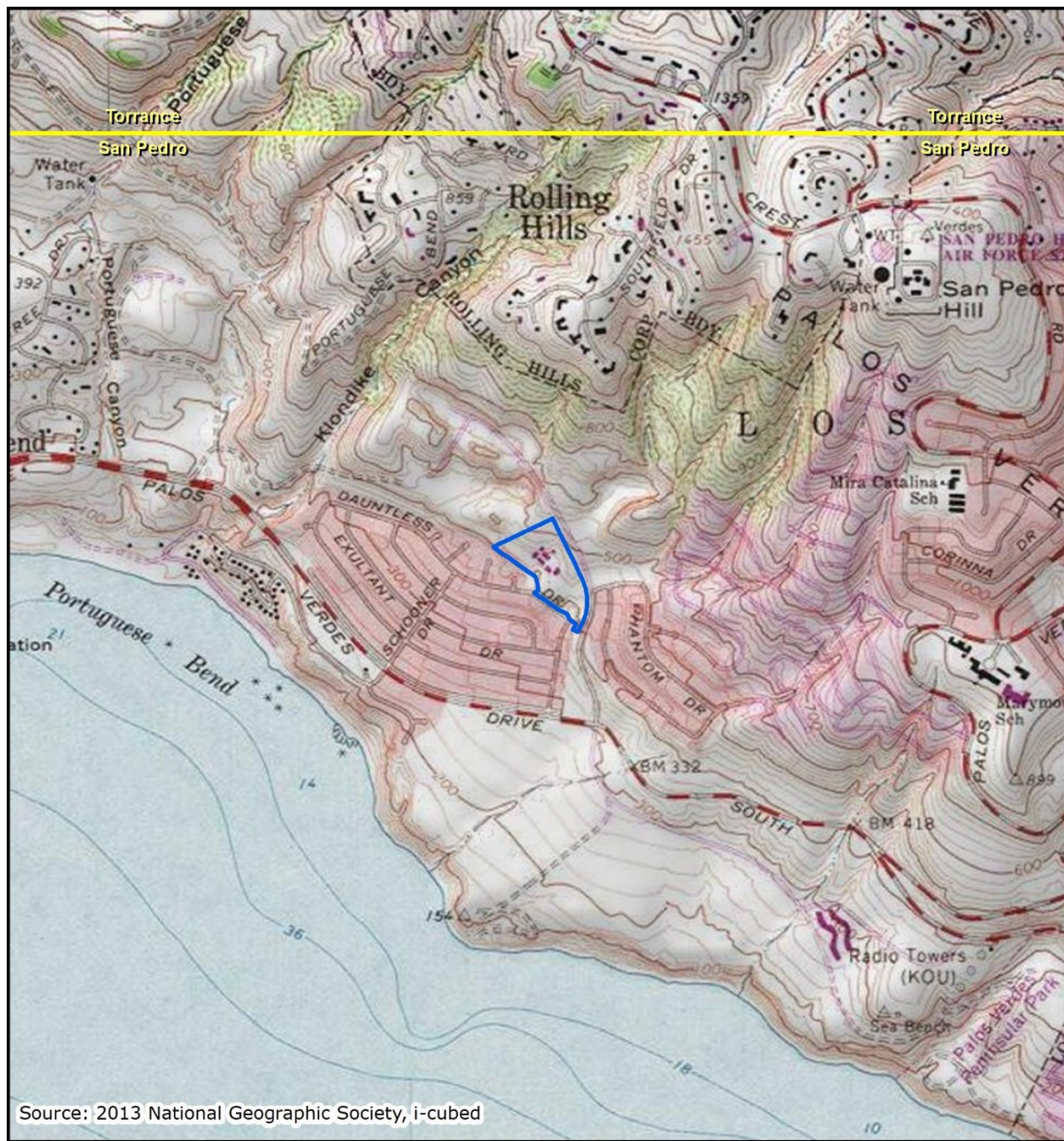
Page 3 of 18

*Map Name: *San Pedro and Torrance, Calif*

*Resource Name or # Ladera Linda Elementary School

*Scale: 1: 24,000

*Date of map: February 11, 2021



Page 4 of 16

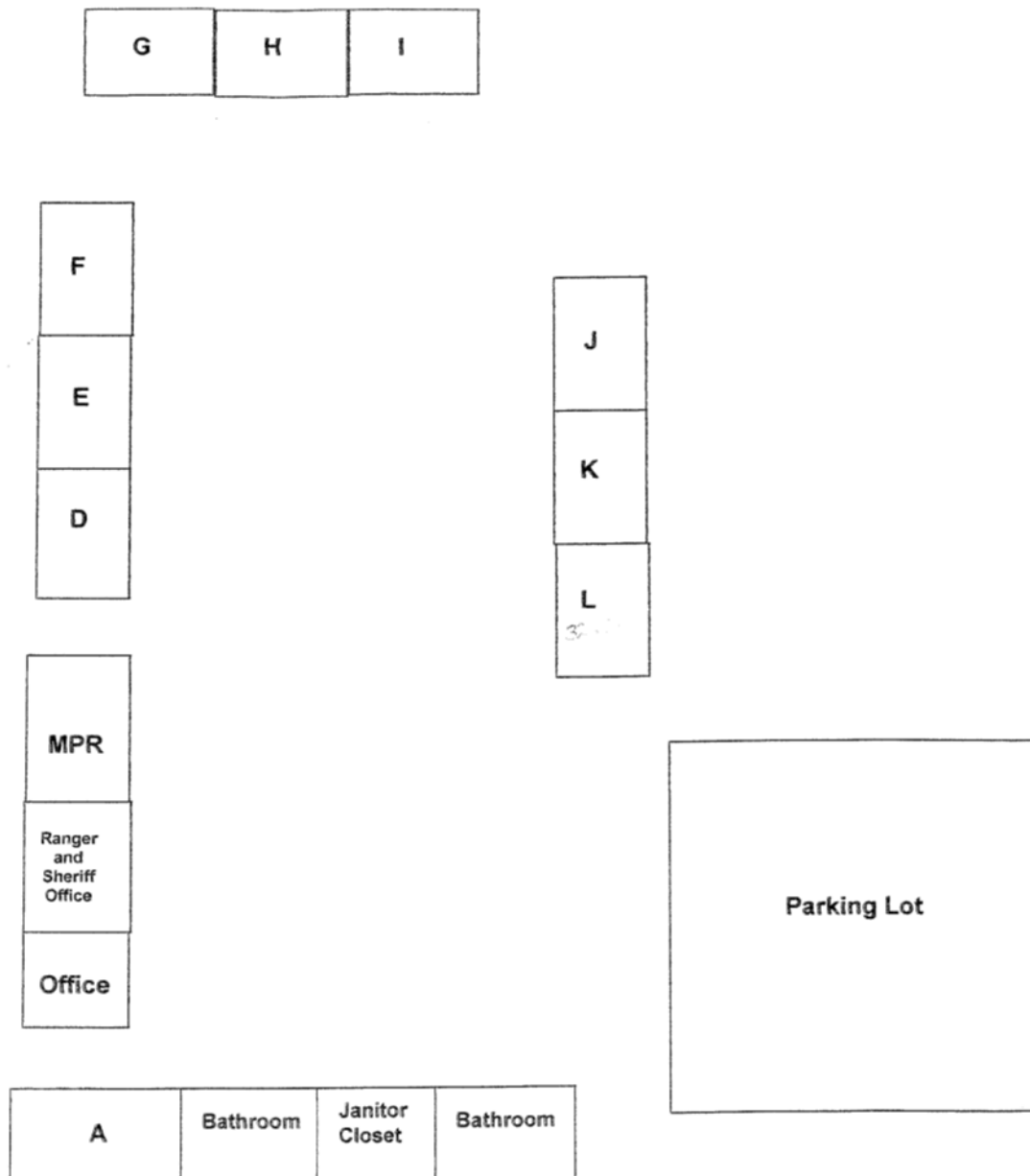
*Recorded by: Chris Wendt, Michael Baker International

*Resource Name or # Ladera Linda Elementary School

*Date: February 8, 2021

☒ Continuation

*B10. Significance (continued):



LADERA LINDA BUILDING PLAN

Figure 1: Ladera Linda Current Building Plan (Priority 1 Environmental 2017: 195)

Page 5 of 16

*Resource Name or # Ladera Linda Elementary School

*Recorded by: Chris Wendt, Michael Baker International

*Date: February 8, 2021

☒ Continuation

***B10. Significance (continued):**

Growth of the Palos Verdes Peninsula/Rancho Palos Verdes

In 1912, Frank A. Vanderlip, former president of the National City Bank of New York and Assistant Treasury Secretary, purchased over 10,000 acres in what is now the Palos Verdes Peninsula. In 1926, he established the Palos Verdes Corporation; by 1949, the real estate firm was the largest business on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and its holdings included two subdivisions, 4,000 acres of farmland, two granite quarries, a private club, a diatomaceous earth mine, and a water company. In 1944, Kevin C. Vanderlip took over as president of the Palos Verdes Corporation and became a key figure in the development of the Portuguese Bend and Abalone Cove. (Palos Verdes Peninsula News 1949: 5; News-Pilot 1926: 1)

One of the basic tenets of Vanderlip's planning was to retain the beauty and "historic charm" of Rancho Palos Verdes. Vanderlip aimed to develop the peninsula in an orderly, well-planned fashion, which included making the peninsula more accessible to the Los Angeles area. Vanderlip and Raymond V. Darby, supervisor for Los Angeles County District 4, which encompassed the Palos Verdes Peninsula, played pivotal roles in developing the extension of Crenshaw Boulevard through the Palos Verdes Hills, which shortened drive times from one hour to forty-five minutes between downtown Los Angeles and the Portuguese Bend area. It also helped spur residential development. In 1939, the City of Palos Verdes Estates was officially incorporated. (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018: I-1; Palos Verdes Peninsula News 1949: 5)

In 1953, the Great Lakes Carbon Corporation purchased 7,000 acres of undeveloped land from the Vanderlip family; the company had previously leased land on the peninsula for mining. However, after several failed attempts at mining that included the 1956 landslide, which destroyed the Livingston Quarry directly above the Portuguese Bend area, causing over \$9 million in damages, the company abandoned mining operations and hired a group of skilled architects and engineers to develop a master plan for development of its property. (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018: I-1; Save Our Coastline 1970: 1)

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw a building boom on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and in 1957 the cities of Rolling Hills and Rollings Hills Estates were incorporated. Fueled by the post-World War II economic growth in the South Bay area and by the Los Angeles County Master Plan, the remaining unincorporated areas of the peninsula (now the City of Rancho Palos Verdes) began to develop rapidly as the County granted several zoning changes that allowed for higher-density construction. In the 1960s, representative leaders of the three existing cities and citizens of the unincorporated areas of the peninsula repeatedly attempted to convince the County to restrain uncontrolled development and institute planning and zoning regulations that were more compatible with the peninsula's unique qualities. This led to the formation of the Peninsula Advisory Council in the 1960s, a group of homeowner associations from the unincorporated areas, to provide more clout in negotiations with the County. Along with the civic leaders of the three incorporated cities—Palos Verdes Estates, Rolling Hills Estates, and Rolling Hills—the Peninsula Advisory Council met with the County and developers to encourage restrictions and regulations on the development of the peninsula's coastal areas. (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018: I-2)

The failed efforts of civic leaders and that of the Peninsula Advisory Council became evident when the County introduced and adopted a new Master Plan for the area, known as the Bevas Plan. This plan enabled the development of high density uses, including high-rise development along the coastline. It became evident that, in order to preserve the area's unique qualities, a different strategy was needed and efforts to incorporate the peninsula's fourth city now intensified. In 1970, Save Our Coastline, a local citizens committee, was founded in the Portuguese Bend area with the aim of incorporating the peninsula's unincorporated areas in order to establish local control. In the committee's first newsletter in January 1970, it set forth its goals:

Save Our Coastline is our means of mobilizing all concerned citizens who are opposed to the desecration of our irreplaceable coastline. SOC's purpose is to inform the public and to give each person a vehicle for doing something meaningful to participate and to help if he shares this concern. SOC is not opposed to properly controlled development of the coastline, done in a way that will preserve and protect the essential character of the area and which will safeguard the natural beauty and scenic views of the shoreline. But when the County of Los Angeles, at the instance of the large landowner, proposes a plan which will destroy a portion of the coastline, we must act to top this, and invite you to join and help us (Save Our Coastline 1970: 1)

Save Our Coastline faced a major challenge. At the time, incorporation laws required that the assessed value of the land owned by the signatories needed to represent 25 percent of the total assessed land value of the proposed city. Additionally, an incorporation attempt could be killed if 50 percent or more of the assessed value of land ownership protested incorporation. At the time, major developers opposing the incorporation controlled 38 percent of the assessed land value, needing only 12 percent to kill the measure. This was accomplished with a petition that did not outwardly protest the incorporation of a new city but rather introduced an alternative of annexation by the nearby Rolling Hills Estates, which had previously declared its intentions to not annex any new properties. Save Our Coastline would eventually file a lawsuit in a California Superior Court contesting the constitutionality of a law that was based on assessed land value rather than one-person, one-vote. The California Superior Court declared the use of assessed land value, as a basis for determining the outcome of an election, was unconstitutional. The ruling was promptly appealed to the California Supreme Court but when the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, Save Our Coastline declared victory. Emboldened by the legal victories, Save Our Coastline petitioned the County Board of Supervisors to accept the signatures on the initial petition and continue

Page 6 of 16

*Recorded by: Chris Wendt, Michael Baker International

*Resource Name or # Ladera Linda Elementary School

*Date: February 8, 2021

☒ Continuation

***B10. Significance (continued):**

the incorporation process. Save Our Coastline's request was approved by a 3 to 2 margin by the Board of Supervisors. (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018: I-2)

The Local Agency Formation Commission set the election for the proposed city of Rancho Palos Verdes on August 28, 1973. Approximately 80 percent of registered voters cast their ballots and voted by a margin of 5 to 1 for incorporation. The name Rancho Palos Verdes was approved and five candidates, out of twenty-four challengers, were elected to the first City Council (City of Rancho Palos Verdes 2018: I-3).

Ladera Linda Elementary/Ladera Linda Community Center

Ladera Linda Elementary School opened in the fall of 1967, prior to the incorporation of Rancho Palos Verdes in 1973, and served the Seaview community in the Portuguese Bend area as part of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District. The school site was designed by the architectural firm Kistner, Wright and Wright and constructed by the contracting firm Mallcraft, Inc., at a cost of \$490,500. However, by the end of the 1970s, the school district was experiencing a severe drop in enrollment even as the population on the Palos Verdes Peninsula increased, due to school funding concerns. Between 1973 and 1979, enrollment across the district dropped by 21 percent. By 1979, Ladera Linda Elementary School was operating at only 58.8 percent of total capacity and was facing closure as the smallest of three elementary schools in the district. The Palos Verdes Peninsula ultimately decided to close Ladera Linda Elementary in July 1980 along with Pedregal and La Cresta Elementary Schools. (LAT 1967: 146; 1969: 194; News-Pilot 1967a: 1; 1967b: 2; 1979: 1; 1980: 1, 12)

In 1981, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District sold the Ladera Linda site to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes which, in turn, began developing the property into a community center in order to offer services and activities to those of all ages in the community. On January 23, 1982, a dedication ceremony for the opening of the Ladera Linda Community Center was held. The community center has been in operation since 1982 and has offered a range of services, classes, events, and programs, which have served a wide variety of community needs. (News-Pilot 1982: 7; The Daily Breeze 1981: 123)

School Design and Construction

The former Ladera Linda Elementary School's layout is part of the mid-twentieth century school design trend known as the California School Plan, also known as the Campus Plan, which emphasized one-story classroom buildings aligned in parallel rows or wings that were separated by open courts. Classroom doors would open to these exterior courts and the buildings were connected by open-air corridors, which protected students from the weather by either a free-standing canopy or with extended rooflines. In the California School Plan, design roofs tended to be either flat or low-pitched with overhanging eaves. Classrooms often displayed ribbon windows that were typically half-height, but could also be high, clearstory openings (Dodge and McCulloch 2013: 47)

Earlier school designs were dominated by the finger-plan design, which utilized "administrative building as the palm and the classrooms extending out like fingers" (Timber Engineering Company, circa 1950:13). By the early 1950s, the popularity of the previously utilized finger-plan school design had begun to decline due to two problems. First, the finger-plan design required large swaths of land to accommodate the extended site plan. Secondly, the plan increased cross-campus walk times and communication. In many scenarios, it became more practical to build upward rather than outward with a finger-plan design, which proved costly for hillside school locations where an expanded footprint meant the increase in expensive grading costs. The California plan offered logical solutions to these issues. It retained the low massing and indoor-outdoor access and views for all classrooms. However, rather than extending wings along an axis, as in the finger-plan design, the California plan called for grouping them as modular, stand-alone units around a shared central courtyard. Classrooms continued to display generous expanses of windows, but now the views encompassed the courtyard and other classrooms, which provided for a more communal and neighborhood-like setting. By the 1960s, the cluster plan had "almost universally replaced the finer plan concept" (Gibson 1966: 1; Sapphos Environmental 2014a: 87-89).

Mid-Century Modernism/Regional Modernism (Post-1945)

Mid-Century Modernism, or Regional Modernism, represents a compromise between the formal, machine-age aesthetic of the International Style and a regional idiom reflecting local precedent and identity. In postwar Los Angeles through the 1960s, Mid-Century Modernism took its cues from the region's first-generation modernists architects like Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, Gregory Ain, Harwell Hamilton Harris, and Frank Lloyd Wright. In the postwar era, second-generation practitioners like Raphael Soriano, Whitney Smith, and A. Quicky Jones established Los Angeles as a center for innovative design and culture (Sapphos Environmental 2014a: 126-127)

Page 7 of 16

*Resource Name or # Ladera Linda Elementary School

*Recorded by: Chris Wendt, Michael Baker International

*Date: February 8, 2021

☒ Continuation

***B10. Significance (continued):**

Mid-Century Modernism is characterized by an honest expression of function and structure and displays little applied ornamentation. Aesthetic effect is achieved through an asymmetrical but balanced, rhythmic design composition, often expressed in modular post-and-beam construction. Post-and-beam construction allowed for open floor plans, ease of expansion, and generous expanses of glazing to increase indoor-outdoor integration. Buildings are generally one to two stories, with an emphasis on simple, geometric forms, and usually display low-pitched gabled or flat roofs with wide roof overhangs and cantilevered canopies supported on spider-leg or post-supports. Cladding materials vary with wood, stucco, brick, stone, and/or steel-framing and glass. Windows are usually flush-mounted with metal frames. The style was popular with postwar institutional and commercial buildings from 1945 until circa 1975 when Title 24 restrictions on glass curtailed the expansive glazing that characterizes the style. Ladera Linda Elementary School represents a very minor example of the style, as it only includes five buildings with ten classrooms with five additional administrative and utility rooms (Sapphos Environmental 2014a: 126-127)

Kistner, Wright and Wright – Architectural Firm

The former Ladera Linda Elementary School was designed by the architectural firm Kistner, Wright and Wright. The firm's founder and senior partner Theodor Charles Kistner (1874-1973) graduated from the University of Illinois School of Architecture in 1897 and continued to practice in Illinois before moving to San Diego in 1911. Kistner quickly established a specialty in school design and was commissioned to design Oceanside Union High School in 1913. That same year, Kistner was awarded a prize by the California State Department of Education for "best example of a four-room schoolhouse" and became the consulting architect of the San Diego School District. By 1933, Kistner had at least 18 schools to his name throughout Southern California and Arizona, as well as other public buildings, such as the Chula Vista Library (1916) and Anaheim City Hall (1921), a design for which he collaborated with M. Eugene Durfee. Kistner's prewar designs explored the popular styles of the time and ranged in style from Mission Revival (Riverview Union High School in the Lakeview School District, 1917-1918) to Spanish Colonial Revival (Brea Grammar School, 1935) to Moderne (Leuzinger High School, 1930, and San Juan Capistrano High School, 1939). (Heumann 2016: 17-18)

In 1923, Kistner opened an office in Los Angeles and in 1929 he built his home in San Marino. Henry L. Wright served as a junior draftsman and "office boy" in Kistner's Los Angeles office. Wright attended the University of Los Angeles from 1924-1925 and then the University of Southern California from 1927-1929 while working for Kistner. Upon completion of his studies, Wright became chief draftsman and office manager in Los Angeles. Kistner entered into a partnership with Robert Rice Curtis in 1933, and left Curtis in charge of the San Diego office. (Heumann 2016: 18)

Following the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and the passage of the Field Act, the firm became increasingly active in rebuilding schools and hired William T. Wright, a structural engineer and brother to Henry L. Wright, to assist. In 1941, William Wright became a principal in the firm Kistner, Curtis, and Wright and the firm expanded its areas of specialties, providing designs for improvements to several military installations, including navy buildings in San Diego and marine bases at El Toro, El Centro, Santa Barbara, Mojave, and Nyland. Between 1945 and 1951, the firm had completed over 540 projects for 70 school districts and averaged 280 employees. The firm Kistner, Curtis, and Wright disbanded in 1952. Kistner and William Wright would go on to form Kistner, Wright and Wright with Henry L. Wright becoming a full partner. (Heumann 2016: 18)

Kistner, Wright and Wright continued to be active designers of schools, military facilities, and other public and private buildings throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Projects during this time included the California Teacher's Association Retired Teachers Home (1958); Cerritos College (1961-1964), which won an American Institute of Architects (AIA) award for excellence; the American President Lines Passenger Terminal (a joint project with architect Ed Fickett, 1961), and published in the August 1963 issue of *Arts and Architecture* and which also won an award with the AIA in 1963; the Norwalk County Building (1963); and the library at Cal Poly Pomona (1968). The firm also served as consulting architects for the San Bernardino, Ventura, and Riverside school districts. Several of the firm's designs were featured in various architectural journals of the period. (Heumann 2016: 18)

Kistner and Henry Wright were both members of the AIA. Henry Wright became a fellow by 1956, and also served as AIA national president from 1962 to 1963, representing AIA on several national panels. Additionally, William Wright was a fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Following the completion of the California Teachers Association building at 1125 West 6th Street, the firm moved into an office in the building and continued operations. Kistner retired from the firm in 1965 and passed away in 1973 in San Diego County. Wright and Wright continued to work from the downtown location until the firm ceased operations in the mid-1970s. It is estimated that the firm had designed some 2,000 schools throughout Southern California since its founding by Kistner in 1911. (Heumann 2016: 18-19)

Mid-Century School Evaluation Methodology

A National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form was completed for Colorado's mid-century schools dating between 1945 and 1970 (Christman 2016). This document provides a historic context for Colorado's schools built during the mid-twentieth century, as well as providing significance thresholds which can be extrapolated for use throughout the country and in California. It can also be used as a California Register evaluation guide for the former Ladera Linda Elementary School.

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***B10. Significance (continued):**

Christman (2016:47-48) states:

School designs evolved during the period from 1945 to 1970, reflecting evolving educational philosophy, but flexibility, economy, practicality, and individuality remained key design concerns throughout. Characteristic features throughout the mid-century period include flexible interior spaces, indoor/outdoor connections, courtyards, covered walkways, integration of school design with the landscape, flat roofs, horizontal emphasis, brick construction with stone and concrete accents, asymmetrical plans, and placement on large lots in residential neighborhoods. Distinctive features of school design from 1945 to the early 1960s include horizontal bands of windows, reliance on windows for lighting and ventilation, walls of glass looking onto courtyards, deep eave overhangs, and rectilinear plans.

To be evaluated as eligible for the California Register as an elementary school, the original function of the building should have been primary education. The typical mid-century elementary school was generally on a large lot surrounded by grass lawns and playgrounds. Suburban or rural elementary schools were usually single story with a sprawling plan. Most elementary schools included classrooms, a principal's office, a teachers' room, and a multipurpose room. For smaller schools or schools built on a tight budget, the multipurpose room often combined the functions of a cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, and community meeting room. Larger schools may have separate gymnasiums/auditoriums, cafeterias, and libraries. Classrooms featured large bands of windows along at least one wall. Many classrooms had exterior doors leading directly to a courtyard or play area (Christman 2016: 48).

Mid-century education buildings will typically be eligible for either their historical associations (Criterion 1) or their architectural designs (Criterion 3), two of the four possible evaluation criteria. Most schools will be eligible at the local level of significance. Schools that served as a model for other schools in the state, either architecturally or for their innovative educational programs, could be considered for state-level significance (Christman 2016: 49).

Criterion 1 Evaluation Methodology

Schools may be significant under Criterion 1 in the area of education for their association with educational activities. Though school designs in the mid-twentieth century significantly departed from earlier designs, schools continued to express the role of education in American society. Changing school designs reflected significant shifts in educational philosophy. The Progressive education movement broadened the scope of instruction offered in America's schools, emphasizing personal development as well as intellectual development. The educational experience became more practical, informal, and child-centered. Classroom methods were less proscribed, encouraging more creativity and engagement from teachers and students. Other important educational trends included the increased percentage of teenagers attending and graduating from high school and efforts to make education more inclusive, serving disadvantaged as well as gifted students. Schools can be eligible for educational activities if they were associated with mid-twentieth century movements in school reform, curriculum, administration, and pedagogy (Christman 2016: 49).

Schools may also be significant under Criterion 1 in the area of social history for their association with mid-century historical trends and events. The contemporary political climate played a large role in mid-century education, including Cold War fears influencing school curriculums, the first successful effort to provide federal funding for schools, and federal enforcement of school integration. In order to be eligible for social history, schools should reflect local historical trends including mid-century population growth, suburban growth, and community planning and development (Christman 2016: 50).

Criterion 3 Evaluation Methodology

Schools have the potential to be eligible under Criterion 3 for architecture if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction of mid-century school design; display innovations in design, including the use of new materials, construction methods, or technology; or are the work of a master architect. "The work of a master" refers to the technical or aesthetic achievements of an architect or craftsman. A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality. The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft. A property is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a prominent architect (Christman 2016: 50; NPS 2002).

For eligible schools, the plan, materials, design features, and landscape features will clearly reflect prevailing mid-century ideas about design, curriculum, child development, and the role of the school in the community. Significant mid-century schools will demonstrate the evolution and popularization of the Modern architectural movement as applied to educational architecture as well as the development of new construction methods and materials. Schools may be also eligible if they are a good example of a popular mid-century plan such as the finger plan (Christman 2016: 50).

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***B10. Significance (continued):**

Eligibility Requirements

Schools must retain the physical features that define the character of the original building. The plan, materials, design, and landscape features should clearly reflect mid-century trends. Schools should retain a unified, functional site design, with resources retaining their original relationship to site features, such as courtyards, lawns, patios, and outdoor play areas. In order to be eligible for listing, resources must generally retain their:

- Historic massing and basic exterior form.
- Historic roof form.
- Historic wall materials.
- Historic pattern of window and door openings.

Other common character-defining features. These include, but are not limited to, the following list. Not all schools included all features, but a good example of mid-century school design will include many of these features.

- Flexible interior spaces
- Integration with the landscape
- Indoor-outdoor spaces, such as courtyards and outdoor breezeways
- Horizontal emphasis (with single-story designs common)
- Long horizontal bands of windows
- Flat roofs with deep eave overhangs
- Interior division of classroom spaces visible from the exterior; recessed bands of windows with brick dividers indicating classroom walls are common
- Modular design, with a rhythmic, asymmetrical, but balanced composition
- Brick construction with stone and/or concrete accents
- Placement in residential neighborhoods on large lots (Christman 2016:51)

California Register Evaluation

Criterion 1

Under the Christman (2016) evaluation criteria, schools may be eligible under Criterion 1 for their association with educational activities such as school reform, curriculum, administration, and pedagogy. Research failed to associate the former Ladera Linda Elementary School with the aforementioned educational activities.

Christman (2016: 50) also states that schools may be significant in the area of social history for their association with mid-century historical trends and events such as the influence of the Cold War on the curriculum, federal funding, school integration, or local trends such as population growth, suburban growth, and community planning and development. Research provided no evidence that Ladera Linda Elementary School was associated with larger national trends or events. Ladera Linda Elementary School was constructed on the Palos Verdes Peninsula during the era of explosive post-World War II suburban growth; however, Ladera Linda does not appear to be located within a neighborhood unit, an important community planning principle of the era. The former Ladera Linda Elementary School is located within the Portuguese Bend area and is not associated with a specific development. The school was built after the surrounding area was developed, and it was not developed as part of a planned community.

The former Ladera Linda Elementary School does not appear to be associated with educational activities or social history, and as such, it does not appear eligible under California Register Criterion 1.

Criterion 2

Research provided no evidence indicating Ladera Linda Elementary School is associated with individuals who have made significant contributions to local or state history. As such, Ladera Linda Elementary School does not appear to be associated with any historically important individuals and does not appear eligible under California Register Criterion 2.

Criterion 3

Under the Christman (2016: 50) evaluation criteria, schools have the potential for eligibility under Criterion 3 for architecture if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction of mid-century school design; display innovations in design, including the use of new materials, construction methods, or technology; or are the work of a master architect. Schools may be also eligible if they are a good example of a popular mid-century plan such as the California School Plan (aka Campus Plan). Furthermore, a school can be a work of a master as long as it expresses a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft (NPS 2002).

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***B10. Significance (continued):**

Ladera Linda Elementary School clearly displays the prevailing mid-century ideas regarding school design such as courtyards, lawns, outdoor play areas, outdoor classrooms, and the California School Plan. It was also designed in the prevailing architectural school style of the time—Mid-Century Modernism. However, it is a smaller example of schools within the Los Angeles area, displaying minor Mid-Century Modern architectural elements. Other schools in the county display more exemplary architectural features, such as Topanga Charter Elementary School in Topanga (pictured below), which was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure.



Photograph 2: Topanga Elementary School (Sapphos Environmental 2014b: 164).

Additionally, Ladera Linda Elementary School appears to be a work of a master: Kistner, Wright and Wright. The firm appears to be locally significant and specialized in school design throughout California, particularly in Southern California. Ladera Linda represents a smaller example of the firm's later work. The school was constructed at the height of the firm's civic and institutional experiences and is not the best example of their work. More significant examples of Kistner, Wright and Wright's work include schools, such as the Soleado Elementary School in Rancho Palos Verdes, which displays excellent mid-century architectural features. Further, a resource can only be eligible for the California Register if it represents a specific phase of a master's work.



Photograph 3: Architectural Illustration Render by Kistner, Wright and Wright of the Palos Verdes Soleado School, 1968 (Mid Century Sacramento 2021).

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***B10. Significance (continued):**

Ladera Linda Elementary School does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3, because it is a minor example of the Mid-Century Modern style and California School Plan construction, is not the best representation of Kistner, Wright and Wright's work, and does not represent a specific phase of the firm's work.

Criterion 4

Ladera Linda Elementary School is not likely to yield valuable information which will contribute to our understanding of human history because the property is not and never was the principal source of important information pertaining to mid-twentieth school development. Therefore, the property does not appear eligible for listing under California Register Criterion 4.

Lastly, the resource maintains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association because it has no known alterations other than the minor modernization upgrades detailed in section B6: Construction History (page 2).

In conclusion, Ladera Linda Elementary School does not appear eligible for listing in the California Register under Criteria 1, 2, 3, or 4 because it lacks association with a historic context; is a minor example of a contemporary-style elementary school; is a minor example of work designed by master architects Kistner, Wright and Wright; does not represent a specific phase of school design for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District; and does not contain information potential. Additionally, the resource was evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)–(3) of the CEQA Guidelines using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Resources Code, and it does not appear to be a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

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P5a. Photographs:



Photograph 4. View west of south and east elevations of classroom buildings.



Photograph 5. View west of play structure and south and east elevations of classroom buildings.

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P5a. Photographs (continued):



Photograph 6. View east of north and west elevations of the classroom buildings.



Photograph 7: View south of the north and east elevations of the multipurpose room and administration offices.

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P5a. Photographs (continued):



Photograph 8: View west of east and north elevation of classroom building.



Photograph 9: View southeast of west elevation and roof of classroom building.

P5a. Photographs (continued):

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Photograph 10: View southwest of courtyard and walkways.



Photograph 11: Ladera Linda Community Center dedication plaque dated January 23, 1982.

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Photograph 12: View of original windows and doors.